

Discourse
delivered on the 1st
after the Disaster of Bu
Hanford

REVERSES NEEDED.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

Sunday after the Disaster of Bull Run,

IN THE

NORTH CHURCH, HARTFORD.

BY

HORACE BUSHNELL.

HARTFORD:

L. E. HUNT.

1861.

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HARTFORD, August 2d, 1861.

Rev. Dr. BUSHNELL,

Dear Sir:

Believing that your Sermon, preached in the North Church last Lord's day morning, should be more widely considered, we respectfully ask of you a copy for publication.

And are yours most respectfully,

JOHN L. BUNCE,
CHARLES HOSMER,
H. K. W. WELCH,
C. N. SHIPMAN,
HENRY C. ROBINSON.

HARTFORD, August 5th, 1861.

Messrs. J. L. BUNCE, CHARLES HOSMER, H. K. W. WELCH, C. N.
SHIPMAN, HENRY C. ROBINSON,

Gentlemen:

The Discourse referred to in your note is readily submitted to the use of the public.

Most respectfully yours,

HORACE BUSHNELL.

REVERSES NEEDED.

PROVERBS 24 : 10.

IF THOU FAINT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY, THY STRENGTH IS SMALL.

ADVERSITY kills only where there is weakness to be killed. Real vigor is at once tested and fed by it; seen to be great as the adversity mastered is great, and also to be made great by the mastering. This, too, is the common feeling of mankind, for thus only comes it to be a proverb or current maxim. And the proverb holds good of all sorts of strength, that of the muscles and that of the nerves, that which lies in resolution and that which comes by faith in God, that which is moral and that which is religious, that which is personal and that which is national, that which belongs to civil administration and that which pertains to the deeds of arms. Small is the strength, anywhere and everywhere, that can not stand adversity, and small will it stay, and smaller will it grow, to the end.

The last Sabbath morning, when you were assembled here in the sacred quiet of worship, the patriot soldiers of your army, that to which you had contributed your sons, your fellow citizens, and your money; that whose preparations and advances you had watched with exulting confidence and with expectation eager as the love you bore to your dear country itself, were being joined in battle with its enemies:

thus to have their terrible worship in the day-long sacrifice of blood, before the belching cannon of the foe, and among their charging hosts of cavalry, on a field that was itself their enemy. If it was unnecessary, it is much to be regretted that the battle should have been given upon that day; but if it was necessary, then I know not any cause more worthy of the day, or any offering that could be deeper in sacrifice, or, in fact, more dutiful to God. The tidings of the evening came, and it was so far victory. Many were exultant, but some of us lay down that night oppressed with dreadful forebodings. In the news of the morning it was defeat and flight and carnage and loss. Our line army was gone, our hopes were dashed, our hearts sunk down struggling as it were in an agony, and our fancy broke loose in the imagination of innumerable perils. We imagined the enemy rushing back on Harper's Ferry and across into Maryland, or down upon the Potomac to cut off the passage of the river, then upon the great fortress of the Chesapeake, to drive in that portion of the army and beleaguer the fortress. We imagined also a political reaction, a difficulty of obtaining recruits, a loss of credit and means for the war in the money market, the probable interference with our blockade by France and England, and finally a general outbreak of factiousness and disorder, amounting to a disorganization of the government. At any rate the struggle must be indefinitely protracted, and the public burdens and distresses indefinitely increased.

These first apprehensions are already quieted, in part. The loss turns out to be less than was feared, the retreat to be less completely a flight. The enemy are quite as much crippled as we. And what is more, a great deal, to our feeling and our future energy, we have the grand satisfaction of knowing that our soldiers fought the day out in prodigies

of valor almost unexampled. Defeat is on us, therefore, but not dishonor; nothing has occurred to weaken us, but examples have been set to inspire us rather in all the future struggle. Let us thank God for this and count it the full half of a victory. Let us also thank God for what is already made clear, that our spirit as a people is not quelled, but that we find ourselves beginning, at once, to meet our adversity with a steady and stout resolve, pushing forward new regiments and preparing to double the army already raised. The flash feeling is over, the nonsense bubble of proud expectation is burst, but the fire of duty burns only the more intensely, and the determination of sacrifice is as much more firmly set as it is more rationally made. The government also is more instructed than it could be without this disaster, and is bracing itself to its work with tenfold energy. The army also has a new leader, in whose conduct we may rest with more implicit confidence. So that in the future, our chances of defeat are really many times fewer than they were, or even could have been before, when it seemed to be so very certain that we could not fail. Our adversity, since we began to bear it, is already increasing our strength.

What is now to be done it is not for me to show; that belongs to the Government. I will only say that some things are to be done by us, that belong to our duty as good citizens. We are not, as good citizens for example, to busy ourselves overmuch in finding who is to blame, and scolding one party or another in the administration of the government, or the army. Nothing will more fatally break down our confidence, or chill our enthusiasm. One thing at least is clear, that the government must govern. And if some mistakes have been made, in what great cause have they not? There may be some incompetent persons in the government

and the officering of the army, but infallible competency—where has it been found? Besides the mistakes have been discovered and the incompetent men are in a way to be weeded out of their places. We want no more a driving force outside of the government, to press it forward when it is not ready; no more a guiding force to thrust external judgments in upon its plans. To speak more plainly still, we want no newspaper government, and least of all a newspaper army. A pasteboard government, or pasteboard army, were just as much better as it is less noisy and less capable of mischief. Let the government govern, and the army fight, and let both have their own counsel, disturbed and thrown out of balance by no gusty conceit, or irresponsible and fanatical clamor.

But the main point for us now is to get ourselves ready for the grand struggle we are in, by duly conceiving the meaning of it, and receiving those settled convictions that will stay by us in all the changing moods we are to pass, and the discouragements we are to encounter. This immense enthusiasm, bursting forth spontaneous, in a day, and fusing us into a complete unity—how great and thrilling a surprise has it been to us! I know of nothing in the whole compass of human history at all comparable to it in sublimity. It verily seems to be, in some sense, an inspiration of God; and it is even difficult to shut away the suggestion that innumerable sacrifices and prayers laid up for us by the patriot fathers of the past ages, were being mixed in now with our feeling, and, by God's will, heaving now in our bosom. See, we have been saying, what an immense loyalty there is in our people! how the simple sight of our flag kindles a fire in us that was never kindled by any grandest impersonation of heroism and historic royalty! It is even so, and we thank God for the revelation; but this loyalty is no fixed fact, it

becomes us to know, as long as it only fires our passion. It must get hold of our solid convictions, and burn itself through into our moral nature itself, in order to become reliable and sure. It must be struck in by sacrifice, drilled into the very bone of our substance, by persistent struggles with adversity, and then it will stand, then it is loyalty complete. To sail out gaily in a breeze, singing patriotic songs, is a good enough beginning of the voyage, but a hurricane or two, or only a bad leak discovered, will take all that away, and then a good steerage at the helm, and a true compass, and a sturdy, stout resolve, kept up through long watchings and exhaustive labors—that only will at last bring in the ship. What I wish then more especially, on the present occasion, is, to speak, not to impulse, but to conviction, not to cry “forward,” “forward to Richmond” or forward to some other where beyond—Key West, or Magellan,—but to go over a calm revision of the matter of the war itself, showing what it means and the great moral and religious ideas that are struggling to the birth in it—possible to be duly born only in great throes of adversity and sacrifice.

It is a remarkable, but very serious fact, not sufficiently noted, as far as my observation extends, that our grand revolutionary fathers left us the legacy of this war, in the ambiguities of thought and principle which they suffered, in respect to the foundations of government itself. The real fact is that, without proposing it, or being distinctly conscious of it, they organized a government, such as we, at least, have understood to be without moral or religious ideas; in one view a merely man-made compact, that without something farther, which in fact was omitted or philosophically excluded, could never have more than a semblance of authority. More it has actually had, because our nature itself has been

wiser, and deeper, and closer to God, than our political doctrines; but we have been gradually wearing our nature down to the level of our doctrines; breeding out, so to speak, the sentiments in it that took hold of authority, till at last, we have brought ourselves down as closely as may be, to the dissolution of all nationality and all ties of order. Hence the war. It has come just as soon as we made it necessary, and not a day sooner. And it will stay on to the end of our history itself, unless the mistake we have suffered is, at least, practically rectified. We have never been a properly loyal people; we are not so now, save in the mere feeling, or flame of the hour. Our habit has been too much a habit of disrespect, not to persons only, but to law. Government, we say, or have been saying, is only what we make ourselves, therefore we are at least upon a level with it; we too, made the nationality, and can we not as well unmake it?

That we may duly understand this matter, go back a moment to the Revolution, and trace the two very distinct, yet, in a certain superficial sense, agreeing elements, that entered into it. First, there was what, for distinction's sake, we may call the historic element, represented, more especially, by the New England people. The political ideas were shaped by religion—so far church ideas. The church, for example, was a brotherhood; out of that grew historically the notions of political equality in the state. Government also was conceived to be for the governed, just as the church was for the members; and both were God's institutes—ordinances of God. The major vote in both, was only the way of designating rulers, not the source of their sovereignty or spring of their authority. Designated by us, their investiture was from God, the only spring of authority. Their text for elective government was the same that our Hartford Hooker used, when preaching, in 1638, for the

Convention which framed our Constitution—the first constitution of the new world, and type of all the others that came after, even that of the nation itself—“Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and *I will make them rulers over you.*” God was to be the head of authority, and the rulers were to have their authority from Him. Such was the historic training that preceded and prepared this wing of the revolution.

The other wing was prepared by sentiments wholly different; such, for example, as are sufficiently well represented in the life and immense public influence of Mr. Jefferson; a man who taught abstractively, not religiously, and led the unreligious mind of the time by his abstractions. It was not his way to deal in moral ideas of any kind. Familiar with the writings of Rousseau and the generally infidel literature of the French nation, his mind was, to say the least, so far dominated by them, as to work entirely in their molds. He had no conception of any difficulty in making a complete government for the political state by mere human composition; following Rousseau's theory, which discovers the foundation of all government in a “social compact.” Going never higher than man, or back of man, he supposed that man could somehow create authority over man; that a machine could be got up by the consent of the governed that would really oblige, or bind their consent; not staying even to observe that the moment any thing binds, or takes hold of the moral nature, it rules by force of a moral idea, and touches, by the supposition, some throne of order and law above the range of mere humanity. Covered in by this immense oversight, he falls back on the philosophic, abstractive contemplation of men, and finding them all so many original monads with nothing historic in them as yet, he says, are they not all equal? Taking the men thus to be

inherently equal in their natural prerogatives and rights, he asks their consent, makes the compact, and that is to be the grand political liberty of the world.

But the two great wings thus described can agree, you will see, in many things, only saying them always in a different sense; one in a historic, the other in an abstractive, theoretic sense; one in a religious, and the other in an atheistic; both looking after consent and the major vote, both going for equality, both wanting Articles of Agreement, and finally both a Constitution. And the result is, that in the consent, in the major vote, in the equality, in the Articles of Agreement, in the Constitution, Christianity, in its solid and historic verity, as embodied in the life of a people, joins hands, so to speak, with what have been called, though in a different view, the "glittering generalities" of Mr. Jefferson. Thus in drawing the Declaration of Independence, he puts in, by courtesy, the recognition of a Creator and creation, following on with his "self-evident truths," such as that "all men are created equal," and that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed;" in which, too, the other wing of the revolution can well enough agree, only they will take them, not as abstractions, but in a sense that is qualified and shaped by their history. They had nothing to do with some theoretic equality in man *before* government, in which, as a first truth of nature, governments are grounded. They were born into government, and they even believed in a certain sacred equality under it, as their personal right. They had also elected their rulers, and so far they could agree to the right of a government by consent, but they never had assumed that men are *ipso facto* exempt from obligation who have not consented, or that an autocratic and princely government is of necessity void and without "just power." Their "equality," their "consent,"

were the divine right of their history, from the landing of the fathers downward, and before the French encyclopedists were born.

You will thus perceive that two distinct, or widely different constitutional elements entered into our political order at the beginning; that, agreeing in forms of words, they were yet about as really not in agreement, and have, in fact, been struggling in the womb of it, like Jacob and Esau, from the first day until now.

We have not always been conscious of the fact, yet so it has been. On one side, we have had the sense of a historic, and morally binding authority, freedom sanctified by law and law by God himself, living, as it were, in a common, all-dominating nationality; fortified and crowned by moral ideas. On the other, we have not so much been obeying as speculating, drawing out our theories from points back of all history—theories of compacts, consentings, reserved rights, sovereignties of the people and the like—till finally we have speculated almost every thing away, and find that actually nothing is left us, but to fight out the question whether we shall have a nationality or not; whether we shall go to pieces in the godless platitudes, or stand fast and live under laws and institutions sanctified by a Providential history. Proximately our whole difficulty is an issue forced by slavery; but if we go back to the deepest root of the trouble, we shall find that it comes of trying to maintain a government without moral ideas, and concentrate a loyal feeling around institutions that, as many reason, are only human compacts, entitled of course, if that be all, to no feeling of authority, or even of respect.

I have spoken thus of Mr. Jefferson and of his opinions, not as invoking the old party prejudice against him, long ago buried; I join no issue with his reputed infidelity; I only

charge that he brought in modes of thought and philosophy, as regards political matters, that we are none the less bitterly pernicious that they were patriotically meant, and gained a currency for them that has made them even identical, as thousands really conceive, with our institutions themselves.

Glance along down the track of our history, now, and see how they have been letting us regularly down towards the present disruption of order; how the moral ideas that constitute the only real basis of government—of ours as of all others—are ignored, omitted, or quite frittered away by their action.

Our statesmen, or politicians, not being generally religious men, take up with difficulty conceptions of government, or the foundations of government, that suppose the higher rule of God. They are not atheists, but such modes of thought are not in their plane. When they hear it affirmed that “the powers that be are ordained of God,” they think it may be very good in the New Testament and the ministers and pious people to compliment their religion by such a tribute, but their scripture notion appears to be forced and far fetched. It signifies nothing in the way of qualifying such an impression, that every human soul is configured to civil, as to parental, authority, bowing to any government actually existing, autocratic, or elective, with a felt obligation, when it rules well. As little does it signify that God, as certainly as there is a God, dominates in all history, building all societies into forms of order and law, and that, when constitutions are framed by men, they were as really framed by God, the Grand Universal Protector of society, and are nothing, in fact, but the issuing into form of a government that He before implanted in the social orders and historic ideas of the people; possible therefore to be framed and to hold

the binding force of laws, because God Himself has prepared them, and stamped them with his own providential sovereignty. Sometimes too, the politicians are a little annoyed, as we may see, by this foisting in of the claims of religion. What has religion to do with political matters? What has the church to do with the state? As if the state were really outside of God's prerogative and he had nothing to do with it!—nothing to do with the marshalling and well ordering and protecting rule of society!

So they fall off easily into the “glittering generalities,” and begin to theorize about compacts, consentings, and the like, building up our governmental order from below. First of all they clear the ground by a sweeping denial; rejoicing in the discovery that all claims of divine right in government are preposterous. If they only meant by this that all claims to govern wrong by divine right are a baseless and dreadful hypocrisis, it would be well; but they really conceive that government is now to rule without any divine right at all; as if there were any such thing as a right that is not divine right, and has not God's eternal sanctions going with it; any such thing as authority in law that is not centered in God, and pronounced in the moral nature by Him.

They do not perceive that God is joined to all right, and all defences of right in society, by the eternal necessity of his nature—stands by them, makes them his own, clothes them with His own everlasting authority; hence that all law gets the binding force of law.

But the ground is clear—religion is one thing, government is another—and now there is nothing to do but to find how man can make, or does make a government without God, or any divine sanction. Well, man is the fact given, government the problem. And the man being a complete individual, independent and sole arbiter of his own actions, and exactly

equal, so far at least, to every other, he may choose, if he please, never to have any government at all. But he consents, and there government begins. He surrenders a part of his own rights, and what he surrenders goes to make the government. The government is, of course, a compact. The major vote chooses the rulers, and the people are the sovereign head whence all law and authority emanate. To them only the rulers are responsible, being in fact their agents, administering a trust for them. And this, it is conceived, is a true account of civil government—our own constitutional government.

These now are the saws of our current political philosophy, figuring always in the speeches and political speculations of our statesmen, from the Revolution downward. They could many of them be true enough were they qualified so as to let in God and religion, or so as to meet and duly recognize the moral ideas of history ; but, taken as they are meant, they are about the shallowest, chaffiest fictions ever accepted by a people, as the just account of their laws.

Let there be no misunderstanding here ; I am not complaining of the laws or the constitutions ; better and more beneficent never existed. I am only complaining of the account that is made of them, the philosophy that is given of their grounds and underlying principles. They represent, in fact, our history, moral and religious ; never in any sense the false reasons, by which we strip them of their sanctity.

There was never, in the first place, any such prior man, or body of men, to make a government. We are born into government as we are into the atmosphere, and when we assume to make a government or constitution, we only draw out one that was providentially in us before. We could not have a king, or a nobility, for example, in this country ; for there was no material given out of which to make either one or the

other. The church life and order was democratic too. The whole English constitution also, was in us before. In these facts, prepared in history by God, our institutions lie. We did not make them. We only sketched them, and God put them in us to be sketched. And when that is done they are His, clothed with His divine sanction as the Founder and Protector of States.

Again, neither we nor any other people ever made a civil compact, except as it was virtually made by God before ; never surrendered a part of our natural self government to endow the government of the State. We never had, in fact, any one right of a government to surrender. What human being ever had, or by any conceivable method could have, as being simply a man, the right to legislate, or to punish, or to make war, or to levy taxes, or to enforce contracts and the payment of debts, or to summon witnesses? On the contrary we go into the civil state for nothing but to get our rights, and have them secured—all the rights we have.

So of what is called the inherent, natural right of self-government in a state, and the right of a government by the major vote. Is it so that no great people of the world ever had a lawful, or legitimate right to rule but our own? And how constantly, when we say it, does the sense of some preposterous assumption creep over the mind of every ordinarily sensible man, raising the suspicion that after all, the institutions of his country are hollow and baseless—even as the theory given to account for them, is plainly seen to be.

So again of the popular sovereignty, the natural sovereignty of the people. If we understand ourselves, the people are no more sovereign, and have no better right to be, than any single ruler has, when ruling in the succession of birth, if he only takes his power in the true historic way of his country and rules well. The real truth is, after all,

that our popular vote, or choice, is only one way of designating rulers, and the succession of blood another; both equally good and right when the historic order makes them so. And then the laws, legitimated by history, and clothed in that manner with a divine right, rule over all—over the elections, over the successions; then over the rulers as truly as the subjects.

Meantime, what results but that we get a government, under these fictions of theory, which, by the supposition, is no government. It is only a copartnership, and has no national authority, no obligation. How can a copartnership amount to a governing power over the parties in it? If they agree to legislate it does not make them a legislature. What are their rulers, but committees, or agents, and what can they do that amounts to government, more than the committees, agents, directors of a bank? Their “be it enacted,” has no force of law, it is only their agreement, or consent, which binds nobody, touches no conscience. They get no authority till we see them authorized to legislate by God. Nothing touches the conscience and becomes morally binding that is not from above the mere human level. Laws become laws only when there is felt to be some divine right in them, some voice of God speaking in them.

Now in all these schemings of theory, by which we have been contriving how to generate, or how we have generated, a government without going above humanity, we lose out all moral ideas, and take away all tonic forces necessary to government. Our merely terrene, almost subterranean, always godless fabric, becomes more and more exactly what we have taken it to be in our philosophy. The habit of respect dies out in us, we respect nothing; authority is more and more completely ignored. What authority have laws when there is no sovereignty back of them, or in them, but

that of the people? The grand, historic, religious element is worn away, or supplanted thus, by what we take to be our wiser philosophy, and the spirit of loyalty runs down to be a mere feeling of attachment, so weak that we are scarcely conscious of it, to our mere compacts and man-made sovereignties.

Meantime our descent is accelerated in the same direction, by the demoralizing forces of peace, and unexampled prosperity, and more than all, by the scrambles of party and the venal intrigues of political leaders and rulers, till finally we reach a state where the government is chiefly valued for what can be gotten out of it, by the farming of its revenues, and offices, and contracts. Reverence to its honor, care for its safety, integrity in maintaining it, willingness to make sacrifices for it, all give way and an awful recklessness respecting it, or what becomes of it, is visible on every side.

And again the same descent is accelerated by the essentially immoral, or unmoral, habit of slavery: breeding, as it does, an imperious, violent, unsubordinated character in the minds that are trained in it. They do not live in law, make nothing of obligation, or duty, but they grow up into their will, into self-assertion, into force and bloody passion, and all the murderous barbarities, misnamed chivalry. To be a man is to be above obedience, and to speak of duty, conscience, obedience to God, is the same thing, whether in young or old, as to be a poltroon, or a sneak. And this wild, self-willed habit grows worse and worse by continuance; being gradually bred into the stock, as all habits are, and becoming a naturally propagated quality; till finally a people is produced, or will be, that are really incapable of law, or sound government—unfit to be rulers, incapable of being ruled.

But the grand crowning mischief is yet to be named. Out of these baseless, unhistoric, merely speculated theories of

the government, and the gradual demoralization of our habit under them, a doctrine of state rights is finally to emerge and organize the armed treason that explodes our nationality. Our political theories never gave us a real nationality, but only a copartnership, and the armed treason is only the consummated result of our speculations. Where nothing exists but a consent, what can be needed to end it but a dissent? And if the states are formed by the consent of individuals, was not the general government formed by consent of the states? What then have we to do but to give up the partnership of the states when we will? If a tariff act is passed, displeasing to some states, they may rightfully nullify it; if a president is elected not in the interest of slavery they may secede; that is, withdraw their consent, and stand upon their reserved rights. "By nature," says Mr. Calhoun, so runs the argument, "every individual has the right to govern himself, and governments must derive their right from the assent, express or implied, of the governed, and subject to such limitations as they may impose."

* * * "Indeed, according to our theory, governments are, in their nature, but trusts, and those appointed to administer them, trustees, or agents, to execute trust powers. The sovereignty resides elsewhere, in the people, not in the government, and with us the people mean the people of the several states." Then of course it follows in the exact strain, as any one may see, of our philosophy, or cant misnamed philosophy, that the states have a right to nullify, or secede at will. And so our brave abstractions that we begun with, come to their issue finally in a most brave conclusion that is everyway worthy of them. No matter that the Constitution asserts in a hundred ways the essential and perpetual supremacy of the government. No matter that it was given to the states to be ratified, in that way to

cut off eternally all pretences of sovereignty in themselves; no matter that more than a full half of the states now existing were actually created and organized by the general government on its own territory. Neither is it any thing that we are landed in the very strange predicament of being a people, the only one ever heard of in the world, without a nationality. Is the nationality in the states? No, that was never so much as thought of. Is it in the general government? No, that is philosophically denied. And so we are left to the luckless condition of being no nation at all, and having no nationality anywhere! We began with a godless theorizing, and we end, just as we should, in discovering that we have not so much as made any nation at all. We scorned this state rights theory at first, but we have been bidding many years for the casting vote of the south, and selling out the nation to pay, and the doctrine, meantime, has been creeping, worm like and silently, into the north, till many have begun to give in to it, scarcely knowing when it arrived. Finally the secession, argued for as a right, begins to be planned for as a fact. Even cabinet ministers in the government were preparing it more than a year ago, as is well ascertained, contriving how to break down the credit of the government, how to empty the armories by a transfer of arms, how to weaken the defences, how to corrupt the allegiance of the army. And now, at last, the fact itself is come, the secession is made—hence the war.

If now you have followed me in this exposition, you have seen how our want of moral ideas, and our commonly accepted philosophy of government, coupled with other demoralizing and disintegrating influences in our scheme of society, both north and south, have been drawing us down to this from the first. We have come to the final break and disaster, just as soon as we must, not a day sooner. Gravity



was never surer in the precipitation of a stone, or more regular in the downward pull and pressure.

And what is it now that is arming to assert and establish the broken nationality? Not religion certainly—it does not appear that our people are consciously more given to religion than they have been—yet, in another view, it is no other than the old historic religious element in which our nationality has been grounded from the first; that which has been smothered and kept under, by the specious fictions we have contrived, to account for the government without reference to God, or to moral ideas. Yes, it is this old, implicitly, if not formally, religious element, that is struggling out again now, clad all over in arms, to maintain the falling nationality. It looked on the Sumpter flag, the stars and stripes, shot through and shot down by traitors, and as it looked, took fire. What a wonder is it even to ourselves, to see the blaze that is kindled. We call it loyalty—we did not imagine that we had it! What a grand, rich sentiment it is! See what strength it has! See how it raises common men into heroes! See the bloody baptism wherewith it is able to be baptized, and how it pours the regiments on, down the rivers and over the mountains, and round the promontories, to hurl their bodies against the armed treason! The mere feeling, the passion, if we so choose to call it—is not the bliss of it worth even the cost of the war? What in fact, is more priceless to a nation than great sentiments? So we bless ourselves in the loyalty of the hour, and the more that there certainly is some latent heat of religion in the blaze of it.

But more is wanted, and God is pressing us on to the apprehending of that for which we are apprehended. Our passion must be stiffened and made a fixed sentiment, as it can be only when it is penetrated and fastened by moral



ideas. And this requires adversity. As the dyers use mordants to set in their colors, so adversity is the mordant for all sentiments of morality. The true loyalty is never reached, till the laws and the nation are made to appear sacred, or somewhat more than human. And that will not be done till we have made long, weary, terrible sacrifices for it. Without shedding of blood there is no such grace prepared. There must be reverses and losses, and times of deep concern. There must be tears in the houses, as well as blood in the fields: the fathers and mothers, the wives and dear children, coming into the woe, to fight in hard bewailings. Desolated fields, prostrations of trade, discouragements of all kinds, must be accepted with unfaltering, unsubduable patience. Religion must send up her cry out of houses, temples, closets, where faith groans heavily before God. In these and all such terrible throes, the true loyalty is born. Then the nation emerges, at last, a true nation, consecrated and made great in our eyes by the sacrifices it has cost! There is no way ever but just this to make a nation great and holy in the feeling of its people. And it is never raised, in this manner, till it has fought up some great man, or hero, in whom its struggles and victories are fitly personated. One really great man or commander we certainly have, mercifully preserved to us to be the centralizing head of our confidence, and fulfill his sublime charge of fatherhood in the conduct of our great affairs. But he belongs, in a sense, to the past, and will soon be gone. We want another, that belongs more properly to the future, the new and great future. And such an one can not be made to order, or by any brief holiday campaigning. He must be long enough and deep enough in the struggle to be crowned as the soldier of Providence. Most deeply do we want such a man, a new Washington, only still himself a man of his

age and time. And if I were a prophet, I would almost dare to whisper his name. Expectation goes before, expectation prophecies. Calling out her soldier son, with blessings on his youth, she anoints him beforehand, even as Samuel anointed David. This, she says, is the man whom the Lord of Hosts will accept. True, these Washingtons are expensive; they cost how many sacrifices, how many thousands of lives, what rivers of tears and blood and money! And yet they are cheap! Our old Washington—what would we take for him now? Give us grace, O thou God of the land, only to deserve and patiently wait, and sturdily fight, for another; so for the establishment of our glorious nationality, and the everlasting expulsion of those baseless, godless theories which our fathers let in to corrupt and filch away the principles of right and law-begirt liberty for which, in fact, they bled!

But this is war, we shall be told, and war is certainly no such moral affair. How then do we expect any such moral regeneration to come out of it? In one view the objection is good; war is a great demoralizer; throwing back on society, men who have been hardened and made desperate, often, by the vices and reckless violences of camp life. But the same is true of peace; that also has its dangers and corruptions; breeding, finally, all most selfish, unheroic, and meanest vices—unting all noblest energies, making little men, and loose, and low; ignorant of sacrifice, and scarcely meaning it, even when they cleave to their virtues. Peace will do for angels, but war is God's ordinance for sinners, and they want the schooling of it often. In a time of war, what a sense of discipline is forced. Here, at least, there must be and will be obedience; and the people, outside, get the sense of it about as truly as the army itself. Here, authority towers high, and the stern necessities of the

field clothe it with honor. Government is here sharpened to a cutting edge. All the laxities of feeling and duty are drawn tight. Principles and moral convictions are toned to a practical supremacy. Hence the remarkable fact that the old Romans were the sternest of all people in their morality. The military drill of their perpetual warfare brought them into the sense of order and law, and the fixed necessity of obedience to rule. And so they became the great law-nation of the world, producing codes and rescripts that have been the stock matter of all the civil codes and tribunals even of the modern nations.

Neither is it any objection that ours is a civil war, however much we may seem to be horrified by the thought of it. Where a civil war is not a war of factions, but of principles and practical ends, it is the very best and most fruitful of all wars. The great civil war of Cromwell and Charles, for example, what was it, in fact, but a fighting out of all that is most valuable in the British Constitution? And what was the result of it, briefly stated, but liberty enthroned and fortified by religion? And there was never a people more fortunate in the occasions of a civil war than we. Not one doubt is permitted us that we are fighting for the right, and our adversaries for the wrong: we to save the best government of the world, and they to destroy it. Whence it follows that, as God is with all right and for it, by the fixed necessity of his virtue, we may know that we are fighting up to God, and not away from Him. And the victory, when it comes, will even be a kind of religious crowning of our nationality. All the atheistic jargon we have left behind us will be gone, and the throne of order, established, will be sanctified by moral convictions. What we have fought out, by so many and bloody sacrifices, will be hallowed by them in our feeling. Our loyalty will be entered into our con-

science, and the springs of our religious nature. Government now will govern, and will be valued because it does, and the feeble platitudes we let in for a philosophy will be displaced by the old historic habits and convictions that have been the real life of our institutions from the first.

All this, you will observe by the simple schooling of our adversities and without any reform or attempted amendment of our institutions. Just fighting the war out, into victory and established nationality, will be enough. It might not be amiss, at some fit time, to insert in the preamble of our Constitution, a recognition of the fact that the authority of government, in every form, is derivable only from God; cutting off, in this manner, the false theories under which we have been so fatally demoralized. But this is no time to agitate or put on foot political reforms of any kind; and I wish it to be distinctly observed, that I am only showing what our adversity means, and helping you to bear it with a resolute heart, for the good that is in it.

As to the great and frowning misery of slavery, I know not what to say, or how the matter may be issued. A profound mystery of God hangs over it thus far, and the veil is yet to be lifted. We certainly did not undertake this war as a crusade against slavery. And yet the supporters of slavery may easily create complications that will turn the whole struggle down upon it, whether we desire it or not, or even when we carefully shun the alternative. This one thing we know, that, in a certain other view, the whole stress now of the war is against slavery. Simply to be victorious in it, leaving the constitutional rights of slavery just as they are, will bring its rampant spirit under, take down its defiant airs, teach it a compelled respect and modesty, and put a stop forever to the disgusting and barbarous propagandism of the past. Then it will be open to conviction, and the laws of

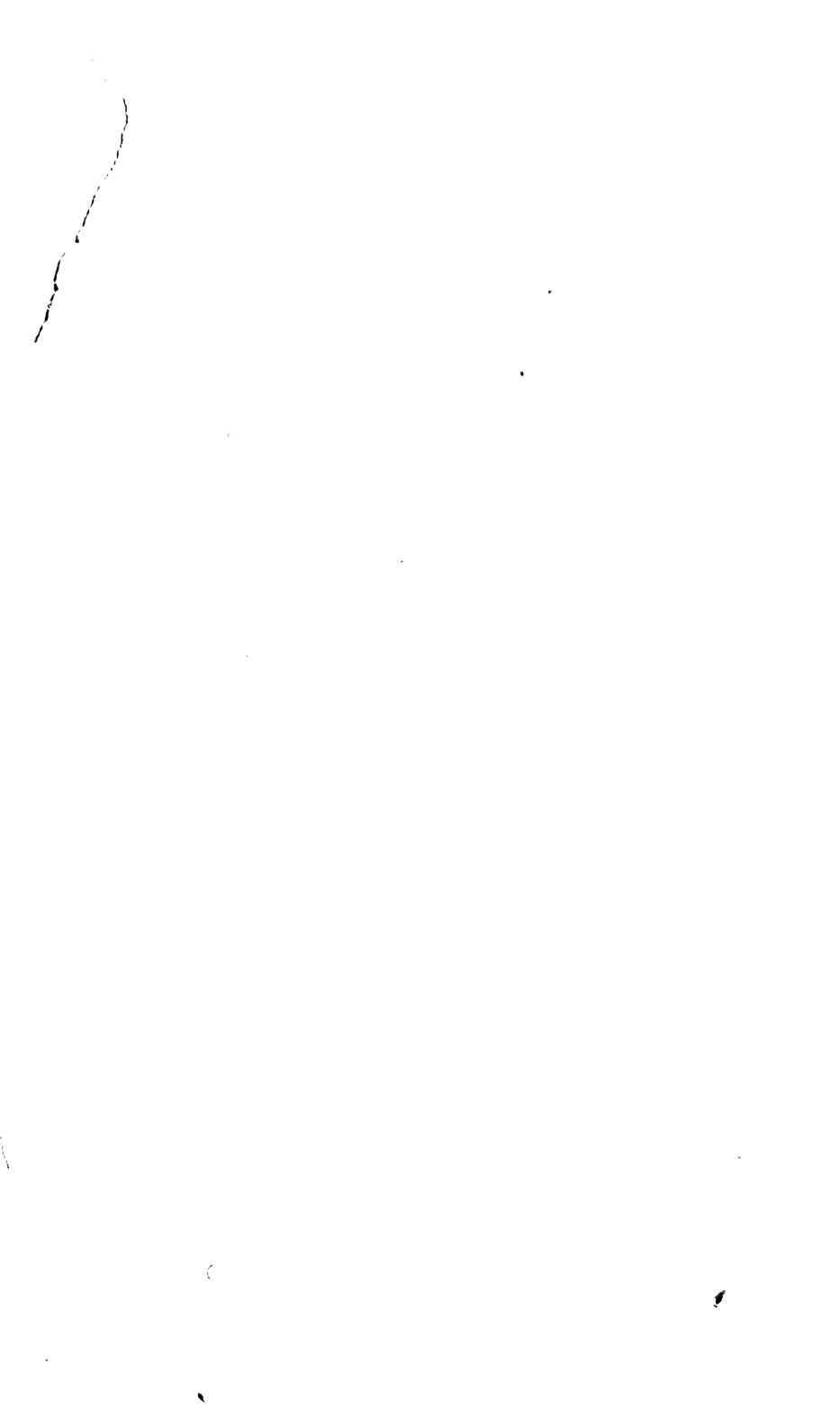
population alone, helped by nothing else, will bring it to a full end in less than fifty years; the best and most merciful end, it may be, which the case permits. Thenceforth we are a homogeneous universally free people, a solid and compact nation, such as God will have us.

Having such a cause, my friends, with such great hopes before us, this one almost glorious reverse that we have met will signify little. Adversity will be our strength, disappointments our arguments. I know not what dark days and times of unspeakable trial are before us, but we must be ready for any thing, daunted and discouraged by nothing. Have we property, let it go—what is property in such a cause? Have we husbands, have we sons, put the armor on them, and the holy panoply of our prayers, and send them to the field. Any thing, that we may have a nationality, and a government, and have the true loyalty burnt into the hearts of our children.

Teach us, O God, to be worthy of these great hopes: make us equal to the glorious calling of thy Providence: be thou God of hosts in our armies: and help us to establish, on eternal and right foundations, The Great Republic of the future ages.



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